

Facts About

State Certification for Electricians



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Labor and Industries administers electrician certification laws. Anyone who works in the electrical construction trade must be certified as a journeyman or specialty electrician. This law is part of Chapter 19.28 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

How are journeyman and specialty electricians different?

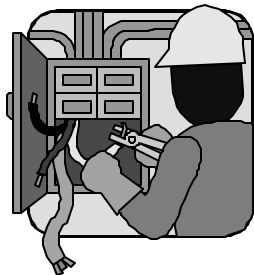
A journeyman electrician is qualified to work in all phases of the electrical construction trade. A specialty electrician can only work in the specific category for which he or she is certified.

How many types of specialty certificates are there?

Electrician specialty certificates include (but are not limited to) residential, pump and irrigation, domestic well technician, signs, domestic appliances, limited energy, limited energy HVAC/refrigeration, non-residential maintenance and non-residential lighting maintenance and retrofit.

How does one become certified to work as an electrician?

You must meet certain qualifications and pass an examination, or you may become certified through mutual exchange (reciprocity) agreements with other states. You can obtain information on reciprocal certification by calling 360-902-5269.



To qualify for examination, you must document your work experience according to the following hour requirements.

- Journeyman Electrician: 8,000 hours, of which 4,000 must be commercial or industrial work.
- Specialty Electrician: 4,000 hours in the appropriate specialty field.

All work must be performed under the supervision of an appropriately certified electrician. To become certified, you must score at least 70 percent on the examination.

Is a separate examination necessary for other Washington jurisdictions?

No. An electrician certificate for journeyman or specialty electrician grants the holder the right to work throughout the state without additional proof of competency.

Must all of my work experience occur in Washington?

No. As long as your work experience meets the requirements to test in this state, your documentation may be from other states.

Does military experience as an electrician count?

An applicant who has received training in the electrical construction trade in the armed services may be eligible to take the examination upon proper verification. Two or more years of military training or experience in a specialized electrical field that is similar to a specialty electrician category may count as one year of experience.

I want to work immediately. Can I get a temporary certificate?

Eligibility for a temporary certificate is determined on an individual basis. A properly completed application, along with additional proof of current certificate status in another state and verification of experience, must be submitted to L&I's central office in Tumwater or one of the service centers.

Once I am certified, do I have to renew my card? What if it expires?

Your certification must be renewed every three years on or before your birthday. There is also a requirement for continuing education. Renewal requirements are: eight credit hours per year of continuing education course(s), payment of the renewal fee and a notarized signature. If your certificate expires, you may renew within 90 days by paying a double fee. If you do not renew within 90 days, you must pass the examination again to re-certify.

Under what circumstances can L&I revoke my certificate?

Your electrician's certificate could be revoked for the following reasons:

- The certificate was obtained through error or fraud.
- The holder is judged to be incompetent.
- The holder violates any of the provisions of RCW 19.28.510 through 19.28.620.

Does my electrician certificate allow me to subcontract wiring jobs to general contractors?

No. A certificate allows you to work only in the electrical construction trade for a properly licensed electrical contractor. If you want to do contracting, you must become a licensed electrical contractor. Labor and Industries can explain these requirements.

Will my electrician's certificate allow me to advertise and do small jobs?

No. State law defines such work as contracting, which requires a different certification. Chapter 19.28.005 RCW defines electrical contracting as "...a person, firm, partnership, corporation or other entity that offers to undertake, undertakes, submits a bid for, or does the work of installing or maintaining wires or equipment that convey electrical current." If you do such work without an electrical contractor's license, you are subject to a fine. Your electrician's certificate also could be revoked.

May I supervise electrical trainees on the job site?

Yes. You may supervise electrical trainees under the following conditions and ratios of journey-level electricians to trainees:

- One trainee working on a commercial/industrial job site for every certified journeyman electrician.
- Two trainees working on a specialty job site for every specialty or journeyman electrician.
- The trainee must be supervised for 75 percent of his or her workday.

Where can I call for more information?

More information about Electrical Certification Services is available at your local L&I office (with the exception of Seattle and White Salmon). See listings under **Washington State** of in the government section or the white pages of the telephone book, or visit L&I on the Internet at <http://www.wa.gov/lni>.

This document is available in alternative formats to accommodate persons with disabilities. For assistance, call 1-800-547-8367. (TDD/TYY users, please call 360-902-5697.) Labor and Industries is an Equal Opportunity employer.
